

# Navy Basing Radar on Santa Cruz Isle

## Permanent Installation Will Be Used to Track Guided Missiles

By a Times Staff Representative

SANTA CRUZ ISLAND, Nov. 13—Past and present—and the future, too—are mixed on a 1500-foot peak of this drowsing channel island that has changed but little since the days of Maximilian.

The past is the sun-swept terrain, the steeply rising cliffs ceaselessly battered by the sea, the bright hues of the mountains, the scragged growth of oak and cactus, a land untouched—almost.

The present is in the roar of machines, the shouts of men, the sound of hammer and saw and cement mixer.

And the future? The alchemy of electronics, the moving dot on the radar scope, the flashing track of guided missiles scorching seaward from the mainland.

### Vital for Nation

For on Santa Cruz the Navy is building a permanent radar station, a vital aid to this nation in the international race for supremacy in "push button" warfare.

From the Guided Missile Test Center 26 miles away at Point Mugu near Oxnard the newest designs in this mysterious field will streak out over the Pacific on test flight to drop into the depths.

Yet with this station, and others like it on nearby channel islands, the missiles will not be lost, for their course will be followed from beginning to end as they telemeter back all the intricate operational knowledge that engineers must know to push deep beyond the threshold of uninhibited, long-range flight.

### Electronics Use

The Santa Cruz station is the first major installation planned to receive this information through the maze of modern-day electronics.

Heretofore the Navy has had small temporary stations on this island and others in the Santa Barbara chain, but their aid in missile test and development proved the value of permanent stations with complete facilities.

And while much of the Navy faces cutbacks in personnel and equipment, the Point Mugu center is expanding under a program of millions of dollars devoted to the all-important field of guided missiles.

The Edward R. Siple Co. of Los Angeles won the contract for the tough Santa Cruz job on a bid of \$421,844, not including extensive Navy equipment that will be necessary to activate the station.

Siple, a bluff, heavy-set man, likes tough contracts. In them there's better money, less competition and a challenge at every hand.

His first big job on the island was to make the harbor—Prisoner's Cove—suitable to land the caterpillar tractors, the scrapers, power shovels, mobile cranes, trenchers and trucks needed on the job.

An ancient pier was rebuilt and a float pier installed, reaching fingers into the clear, green waters of the cove.

Tons of equipment was shipped in from the mainland when the job began last July 4. The piers were loaded with boxes and bales and barrels. Up on the rocky shore between the piers rumbled LSMs (landing craft, mechanized) to disgorge rolling equipment as well as whole trailer-loads of gear and supplies.

### Road Problem

Next was the rugged task of building a winding road over the rolling mountains, a road six and one-quarter miles long to cover a mile and one half of the island as the crow flies.

Called "the Little Burma Road," it was gouged and blasted and

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scraped from the earth, circling back and forth to keep the grade at 17½% or less. A quarter of it was "shot" with dynamite, where cuts as deep as 40 feet were required. It was finished—some 36 feet wide all the way—in two months.

The Navy has the right of way on the road and leases three and one-half acres on the summit from the vast Edwin L. Stanton ranch for the radar station where (at present planning) two officers and 30 men will be quartered constantly to track Point Mugu's guided missiles in the flight.

### Four Major Units

On the station site, Siple's crews have almost completed four major units—a radar receiving building, a transmitting building, with tower; a barracks building (with mess hall and recreation room) where Navy men will be housed in mainland comfort, and a generator building.

Siple's tough, experienced crewmen—he calls them "pirate" labor and gathers them from all sections of the country—are men who also love to tackle hard out-of-the-way jobs. Their pay is higher than average and they earn it.

One of the problems these men solved, for instance, was the laying of a pipe line six miles across the mountains from a natural spring to the construction camp. And every day brings new problems, a vehicle broken down, a crane broken, etc. But each is met and conquered. It must be, for there are none of the helping facilities of "civilization" at hand.

### Diplomacy Needed

Foreman of this tough, frontier outfit is Allan Harris of San Gabriel, a man of drive and extraordinary diplomacy in handling the crews, keeping the job going and maintaining peace in a camp that in some ways is reminiscent of an early Western mining town.

Except for the food.

The white-hatted cook is Joe Wade, who turns out vittles that would make a Los Angeles hotel chef's eyes pop open. Variety and plenty is Wade's motto and he sticks to it, with much of the food supplied by Siple's own ranch between Mint and Boquet canyons near Los Angeles.

### Seconds Appreciated

"I never et better," one huge, sun-tanned laborer said at lunch as he reached for a second steak.

Siple's job for the Navy is better than 85% complete on the mountain top, where the cobalt stretches of the Pacific can be seen on both sides washing the shore with foam.

His crews will be finished before Christmas, several months ahead of schedule.

Then the Navy will move in—equipment, technicians.

And new missiles will sweep out of Point Mugu, reaching farther and farther beyond Santa Cruz and her sister islands, far beyond the horizon over projected ranges that must remain secret.